

REMARKS

Claims 1-34 remain in this application. Claims 15 and 30 have been amended to better define Applicants' invention.

Claims 1-14, 16, 17, and 31-34 stand allowed. Claims 20, 22, 25, and 27-29 were objected to. Claims 15, 21, 23, 24, 26, 30 stand rejected under 102(b) as anticipated by Nozaki et al. (US 5,193,030). Claims 18 and 19 are rejected under 102(e) as anticipated by Ishii et al. (US 6,744,571 B2). Applicants traverse these rejections and submit that, as amended, all claims define over the art and are in condition for allowance.

Each of claims 15 and 30 has been amended to recite that the first lens unit has a reflecting optical element (R1) having a reflecting surface for bending an optical path. Support for this limitation is found at page 64, lines 3-5 of the specification. In contrast, Nozaki et al. fail to disclose a reflecting optical element having a reflecting surface for bending an optical path in the first lens unit.

Therefore, amended claims 15 and 30 are not anticipated by Nozaki et al. and thus are now allowable. Claims 21, 23, 24, and 26, which depend from claim 15, also are allowable. In addition, claims 20, 22, 25 and 27-29, which are objected to as being dependent from the rejected base claim 15 directly or indirectly, also are in allowable condition.

Applicants submit that claims 18 and 19 as filed distinguish over the art. In the zoom lens according to claim 18, the second lens unit and the third lens unit together have four aspherical surfaces in totality. The Examiner states that Ishii et al. disclose that the second lens unit (G2) and the third lens unit (G3) have four aspherical surfaces. Applicants disagree. None of Ishii's examples disclose the claimed arrangement. What is disclosed by Ishii is that the second lens unit and the third lens unit combined have only one or two aspherical surfaces in totality (See numerical data of Examples 1-26 in columns 24-41 and the corresponding Figs. 1-28). For these reasons, original claim 18 is not anticipated by Ishii et al. and thus is allowable.

In the zoom lens according to claim 19, each of the second lens unit and the third lens unit has two aspherical surfaces. The Examiner states that Ishii et al. disclose that each of the second lens unit (G2) and the third lens unit (G3) has two aspherical surfaces. Applicants again disagree. Every example of Ishii et al. discloses that each of the second lens unit and the third lens unit has at most one aspherical surface (See numerical data of Examples 1-26 in columns 24-41 and the corresponding Figs. 1-28). As a result, original claim 19 is not anticipated by Ishii et al. and thus is allowable.

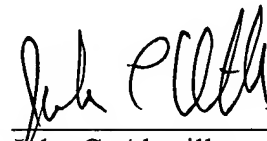
In view of the above, Applicants believe that all claims remaining in this application are in condition for allowance, prompt notice of which is respectfully solicited.

The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (202) 220-4200 to discuss any information concerning this application.

The Office is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or § 1.17 or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

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